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Ancient Wisdom for Modern Management: Leadership Insights from the Bhagavad Gita

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Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita (BG) provides eternal insights into leadership that have far-reaching implications for human health and the health of organizations. The purpose of this study is to systematically review 43 articles published in peer-reviewed journals and indexed in Scopus from 1999 to 2025 that investigate BG-based leadership in contexts of religiosity, spirituality, organizational transformation, and health care. Five emergent themes from the analysis are (1) Visionary Leadership and Strategic Dharma, (2) Ethical Foundation for Sustainable and Healthy Organizations, (3) Inner Mastery and Self-Transcendent Leadership, (4) Transformative Pedagogies and Character Development, and (5) Resilient Leadership in Times of Disruption. Findings suggest that BG concepts, such as dharma (duty), viveka (discernment), and Nishkama Karma (selfless action), promote ethical responsibility, psychological resilience, spiritual wellness, and holistic health. Applications to Health Care, Medicine, and Education demonstrate BG's relevance in reducing stress, providing empathic care, and creating human-centered leaders. The findings are grounded in the Antecedent–Decision–Outcome (ADO) framework to describe how antecedent factors (i.e., spiritual virtues) influence leadership and health outcomes through internal transformation, which is moderated by contextual factors. The review indicates that before 2017, the literature examined in this review reflected philosophical discourse, while thereafter, empirical research shows that BG's global relevance continues to grow. Based on the findings, this research establishes BG as a universal model of ethical, resilient, and health-based leadership and identifies theoretical, managerial, spiritual, and future research implications.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, leadership, systematic literature review, Religiosity, ADO framework.

Introduction

The modern leadership aspect is revolutionary as it can shape the organizational culture, performance, and long-term success and has grown to be more dynamic than positional power as influence, emotional intelligence, and moral accountability (Farnese et al., 2024; Ahsan, 2024; Pujiono et al., 2020; Deshmukh and Dwivedi, 2017). With digitalization and globalization transforming the work organizations, managers have to operate within the competitive market environment and the sophisticated social structures and ethical issues (Nguyen and Tran, 2018; Hee and Gurd, 2010). Conventional models can be applied successfully in a stable environment, but they are likely to fail in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment (Abukalusa and Oosthuizen, 2025; Castillo and Trinh, 2019). As a result, recent models focus on self-development, awareness, and values-oriented decision-making, which is why the ancient wisdom schools attract the attention of scholars who link personal development to the ability to lead people (Hegde and Nayak, 2025; Lippincott, 2018; Jijina and Biswas, 2022).

One of the most illuminating books on this

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knowledge is the Bhagavad Gita (BG), an eternal philosophical dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, which addresses the three topics and presents them as altruism, emotional resilience, and moral duty (Simpson and Cunha, 2021; Nirban, 2018). Nishkama Karma (action without attachment), Samatva (equanimity), and Sthitha Prajna (steadfast intellect) are some of the concepts that contribute to calmness and consistent performance in uncertain times (Kuknor et al., 2022). Moreover, the Dharma concept of the Gita places personal ethics in the context of collective duty, which encourages integrity and leading by example - values that are closely intertwined with servant and transformative leadership behaviors (Singh et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 1999; Sinha and Singh, 2013). Such qualities as Viveka (discernment) and Vairagya (detachment) are also emphasized as factors to negotiate the complicated decision-making (Kaipa, 2014; Pathak, 2025).

Based on these earlier propositions, interdisciplinary studies have integrated modern leadership theory and Gita philosophy. As an example, Simpson and Cunha (2021) have created a Linked Leadership Model, which integrates the ideas of BG with systemic consciousness and links operational effectiveness and spiritual growth (Chatterjee, 2022). In the same way, Kuknor et al. (2022) explore the connection between the Gita and ego depletion in leaders to complete their duty to society and the universe, and Tenneti et al. (2022) focus on Sthitha Prajna as a means to develop inner mastery. The mythological stories that are used by Kumar et al. (2019) to demonstrate how devotion enhances trust include the humility of Hanuman. Also, Sathish et al. (2019) introduce the Mishra paradigm, which correlates the three Gunas with the typologies of leaders, and Michael (2018) and Rajandran (2017) argue that BG metaphors would allow leaders to overcome transactional orientations towards transformational service.

The practical and theoretical advantages of learning the Gita are the understanding of leadership through a non-Western, ethics-focused lens, which expands the world discourse (Natesan et al., 2009; Simpson and Cunha, 2021). The reading provides materials on self-regulation, reflective inquiry, and presence (Jijina & Biswas, 2022). According to Dhamija et al. (2023), Dharma is a prescription on how one can shift procedural ethics to moral purpose, which ensures value creation in the long run (Tripathy et al., 2020). Interconnectedness is developed in these lessons, and they are actively used in leadership development programs to develop character and resilience (Frey et al., 2017; Jayanti, 2020; Maharana, 2019; Sinha and Srivastava, 2022).

With the development of the field, management studies are shifting towards the empirical investigation of the subject (Dubey et al., 2024; Bansal and Kapur, 2023). This shift involves seeking the cross-cultural portability of Gita principles (Linderborg, 2024) and transferring them to technology; Yadav and Bagga (2020) suggest the introduction of Gita ethics into AI to hold it morally responsible. Lastly, the spread of psychometric assessments of such dispositions as detachment is a good sign that spiritual intelligence is becoming a legitimate requirement in the framework of responsible leadership (Bansal and Kapur, 2023). A selected few verses in the BG concerning the leadership lessons will be highlighted in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Leadership verses & implications from the Bhagavad Gita

Serial No	Chapter	Serial No	Original translation	Leadership lessons
1	3	21	King Janak and others achieved perfection by carrying out their assigned tasks. In order to lead by example and benefit the world, you also need to fulfil your obligations. Common people follow the activities of exceptional individuals. The entire globe aspires to whatever ideals they establish.	Leaders gain authority, respect, and credibility by consistently living up to their words. This is because followers will not take a leader seriously if they say one thing and act differently. Instead, they will follow their leader's example exactly.
2	3	23	For all men would follow My footsteps in every way if I did not diligently carry out the assigned tasks, O Parth.	Arjuna is cautioned by Krishna to set a good example. According to this viewpoint, leaders are powerless, their degrees of freedom are taken away, and everyone on the planet will closely observe their every move and mindlessly follow them.
3	2	2	"My dear Arjun, how has this delusion overtaken you in this hour of peril?" replied the Supreme Lord. It is not appropriate for a person of honor. It leads to shame rather than to higher abodes.	Lord Krishna tells Arjuna about a very important quality of leadership. Lord says that a true leader does not become sad at a time of crisis. He is stable enough to deal with the scenario in front of him. Leaders should be able to handle adverse situations with a brave heart.
4	2	14	O son of Kunti, transient sensations of joy and sorrow arise from the interaction of the senses with the sense objects. Like the winter and summer seasons, these are cyclical and not permanent. One must learn to live with them without being bothered by them, O descendant of Bharat.	Developing serenity is a prerequisite for successful leadership. By effectively controlling the world within, it allows one becomes an expert at handling the world around them. In a sense, Lord Krishna uses this to teach us how to treat ourselves when we are involved in busy pursuits.
5	2	38	Fight for the sake of duty, treating joy and sorrow, loss and gain, and success and failure equally. You will never sin if you carry out your duty in this manner.	Leaders should remain composed and balanced, even when facing adversity or experiencing success. A leader should not be overly elated by a victory or disheartened by a setback, but rather maintain a steady perspective.

Source: Bhagavad Gita, Compiled by authors

The Bhagavad Gita offers a comprehensive leadership framework that incorporates moral, spiritual, and emotional resilience for challenging circumstances (Dhiman et al., 2019). A systematic review would integrate these diverse perspectives to bolster contemporary theory and identify deficiencies. In a world where morals are unclear, Gita-based leadership provides a strong and useful framework for making compassionate changes in the 21st century (Nader & Maheshwari, 2023). Therefore, by this multidisciplinary review, the authors will be able to summarize, analyze & conceptualize new directions in the LS-BG domain by addressing these five Rqs-

RQ1: What are the publishing and citation trends in LS-BG research?

RQ2: What are the top contributors in the LS-BG domain research in terms of, e.g., countries, journals, institutes, keywords, top-performing articles, etc.?

RQ3: What is the current domain's existing research (themes) pattern & how has the literature evolved?

RQ4: What is the conceptual structure of this domain (Antecedents, decision & Outcome factors)?

RQ5: What could be the theme-wise future research question to advance the LS-BG domain?

The article's remaining sections are organized as follows: Section 2 walks readers through the methodology and data collection. Section 3 focuses on the performance analysis related to LSBG. Section 4 discusses the thematic analyses; Section 5 discusses all five RQs, whereas Section 6 sheds light on the Implications, Section 7 presents the Limitations and Future Research Discussion. The final section, Section 8, concludes the study with an overview of the research.

Methodology

Data Extraction

Scopus was chosen for our literary research assessment due to its extensive coverage and comprehensive indexing. Unlike Web of Science and Scopus, Scopus offers wider coverage (Meho & Rogers, 2008; Panda et.al., 2025; Panda & Puri, 2025). We manually filtered the returned collection's titles and abstracts to exclude publications not related to Leadership (LS) or the Bhagavat Gita (BG). A June 2025 search yielded 162 publications using the query phrase. For the search string, the authors followed the previous literature to identify the keywords related to Leadership (Bansal and Kapur, 2023; Jandhyala and Kumar, 2023; Rastogi *et al.*, 2023; Tenneti *et al.*, 2022) and the Bhagavat Gita (Kuknor *et al.*, 2022; Simpson and Cunha, 2021; Natesan *et al.*, 2009). Apart from these, other keywords related to Leadership, such as leader, mentor, supervisor, and guide, were also added to the search string by the authors. The final search query can be found in the attached Table 2 below.

Table 2: Search query string in Scopus in Title- Abstract-Keyword field

Query String (Data searched on 30th June 2025)	Database	Documents
TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Leader*" or "Mentor*" or "Supervisor*" or "Guide" AND "Bhagvad Gita*" or "Gita*" or "Lord krishna*" or "Mahabharata" or "Arjun*" or "Pandavas" or "Kaurava*" or "battle of kurukshetra*") AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))	Scopus	162

Source: Authors'

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

We conducted a three-step search for English-language articles and reviews, screening abstracts and keywords to identify relevant publications. To facilitate systematic data collection and provide an in-depth evaluation of Leadership and Bhagavad Gita scholarship, we utilized the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart, outlined in Figure 1 (Moher et al., 2009). This approach meets the growing demand for rigorous, precise research methodology (Tranfield et al., 2003). Originally popular in medicine, this transparent, iterative process aids researchers in accurately summarizing the existing body of literature (Liberati et al., 2009).

The foundation of our PRISMA flow diagram is a four-step procedure:

Identification:

The first step for researchers is to formulate the research issue and identify relevant studies. This process requires a methodical and thorough search using precise inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Screening:

Using the research question and the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, researchers assess the studies found in the first step. Studies that fit the inclusion criteria are usually thoroughly scrutinised after their titles and abstracts have been evaluated.

Eligibility:

To ascertain eligibility, researchers evaluate the studies that make it past the screening phase. Examining the studies' calibre and applicability to the research question is part of this assessment.

Inclusion:

At this stage, studies that meet the eligibility criteria are incorporated into the systematic review. Researchers extract and analyse data from these studies, combine them, and present the results.

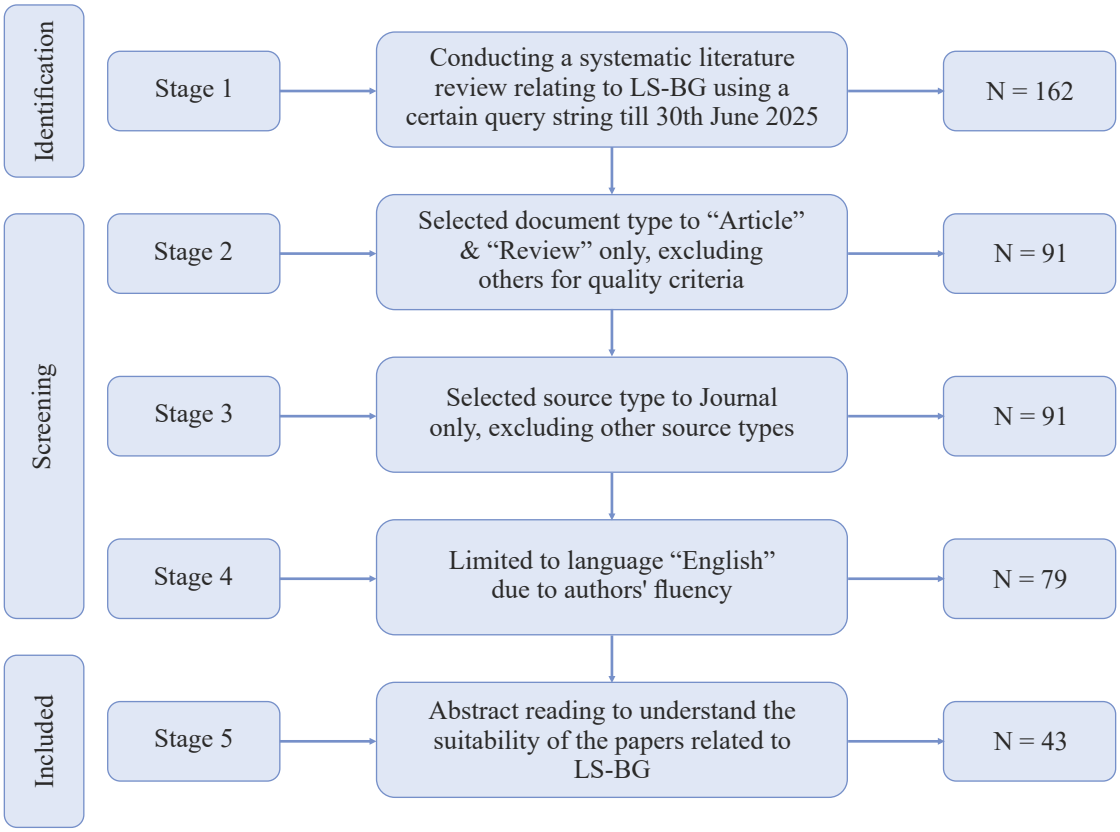


Fig 1: PRISMA diagram for the data collection process

Results & Performance Analysis

Publication trend & Main information:

The timeline of publications reflects an increasing but unpredictable trend overall. There is a low base of activity indicated by there being two papers published in 1999, and not a single document published between 2000 and 2005. The numbers began to exhibit an irregular pattern, appearing to resume in 2006, and there were years after 2006

with spikes and years with few or no publications. There were obvious spikes in 2017, 2020, 2023, and 2025 (i.e., 4, 4, 6, and 5 articles). The important point is that, aside from the year-to-year volatility, the overall growth is positive, which indicates that research progress in the field has accelerated, and publication volume growth generally means that interest in the scholarly community is increasing.

A dataset of 43 records issued from 1999 to 2025, extracted from 26 different sources, including only journals. Over the observed period, there was a slight but steady growth in scholarly production, reflected by the average growth rate of 3.59% noted in the published outputs. The body of literature is not only situated in historical frameworks but is also relatively recent, with an average age of seven years. Concerning document types, there are 39 articles & 4 are reviews in the corpus. There was a total of 161 author-defined keywords as content descriptors, once again indicating the distinct richness of themes, and range and scope of literature available. The details about the publication trend & information related to papers in the database can be found in Figure 2 & Table 3.

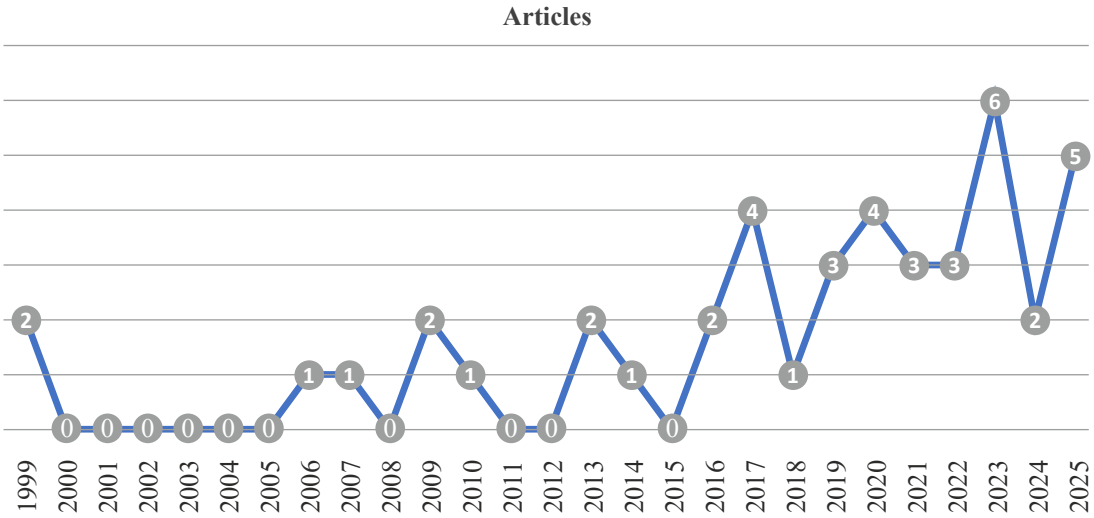


Fig 2: Publication Trend related to LSBG research

Source: Authors'

Table 3: Main information related to the LSBG domain

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1999–2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	26
Documents	43
Annual Growth Rate %	3.59
Document Average Age	7
Average Citations per Document	5.535
References	1281
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	52
Author's Keywords (DE)	161
AUTHORS	
Authors	92
Authors of Single-Authored Documents	18
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-Authored Documents	18
Co-Authors per Document	2.37
International Co-Authorships (%)	9.302
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	39
Review	4

Source: Authors'

Most Productive author, affiliations & countries

As the domain is currently evolving & the scholarly community is taking interest in LS-BG related studies, SP Singh is the most productive author with three publications, followed by UN Biswas & P Jijina with two publications each. In terms of most productive affiliations, the majority of the institutions are from India due to the text's deep cultural, spiritual, and philosophical roots in Indian tradition. Familiarity with Sanskrit, access to traditional and academic institutions, and the Gita's integration into daily life and national identity make India a natural hub for its scholarly exploration. MSU Baroda is the most productive institute with five publications, followed by GLA University & Symbiosis International University

with four publications each. Likewise, India is the most productive country in this domain, with 32 publications, followed by Malaysia & Australia. The top 10 most productive authors, affiliations & countries can be found in the attached table 4 below.

Table 4- Top 10 productive authors, institutes & countries in the LSBG context

Serial No.	Name of the Author	NP	TC	Affiliation	NP	Country	NP	TC
1	Singh SP	3	3	The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	5	India	32	149
2	Biswas UN	2	16	Gla University	4	Malaysia	2	43
3	Jijina P	2	16	Symbiosis International (Deemed University)	4	Australia	1	16
4	Sinha Ak	2	9	Bhaktivedanta Hospital and Research Institute	3	Bangladesh	1	5
5	Joshi A	2	5	JECRC University	3	Belgium	1	8
6	Kuknor S	2	3	SRI SRI University	3	Italy	1	0
7	Kumar D	2	2	Alliance University	2	Pakistan	1	5
8	Rastogi S	2	3	Bharti Hospital	2	Portugal	1	10
9	Singh D	2	2	Lucknow University	2	Singapore	1	16
10	Aggarwal S	1	5	Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies	2	Sweden	1	0

Source: Authors'

Most Productive Documents, Journals, & Keywords in the LS-BG domain

The attached Table 5, below, will shed light on the most productive documents, Journals, & Keywords. Sharma et al. (1999), Muniapan & Satpathy (2013), & Chinna et al. (2009) are the most productive documents, whereas Purushartha is the most productive journal with 12 publications, followed by the Journal of Human Values (5) & Psychological Studies (2). In terms of keywords, Bhagavad Gita (12), leadership (10), & India (5) are the most productive ones.

Table 5: Top 10 productive Documents, Journals & Keywords related to the LSBG domain

Serial No.	Documents	TC	Journal	NP	TC	keywords	Occurrences
1	Sharma et al. (1999)	49	Purushartha	12	36	Bhagavad gita	12
2	Muniapan & Satpathy (2013)	35	Journal of Human Values	5	87	Leadership	10
3	Chinna et al. (2009)	18	Psychological Studies	2	8	India	5
4	Hee and Gurd (2010)	16	European Business Review	1	18	Equanimity	4
5	Prasad (2014)	15	Gema Online Journal of Language Studies	1	8	Philosophy	4
6	Nayak (2016)	14	Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism	1	5	Spirituality	4
7	Jijina et al. (2020)	10	Journal For Reattach Therapy and Developmental Diversities	1	1	Culture	3
8	Simpson and Cunha (2021)	10	Journal Of Business Ethics	1	14	Globalization	2
9	Hoecke (2006)	8	Journal Of Leadership Studies	1	10	Healthy care	2
10	Rajandran (2017)	8	Journal Of Management Development	1	15	Religion	2

Source: Authors'

Thematic analysis

The purpose of this section is to synthesise each viewpoint found within the studies related to LS-BG, and then to list the study themes used to determine the thematic analysis result. Due to the complexity of the research objects and the number of topics to consider, it is difficult to categorise the research. All of the themes summarised therefore represent the range of the larger area whilst still representing the recurring underlying themes evident from the different studies. We structure our discussion by using the four general characteristics of the present-day area of LS-BG in order to illustrate recent advances, to identify issues and problems related to these advances, and suggest directions for future research. Because of the number of diverse themes in existence, we provide independent perspectives on each viewpoint; therefore, each analysis will describe the major characteristics of that viewpoint and will describe issues and areas for further investigation. Based upon the selected forty-three documents reviewed, forty-two of these documents will be categorised along each of five separate themes, which will be addressed within the following sections.

Theme 1- Visionary Leadership and Strategic Dharma

The Bhagavad Gita offers a comprehensive framework for inspiring leaders through dharma (duty). According to Kuknor et al. (2022), the teachings in the Bhagavad Gita help to transcend one's self and fulfill all four types of duty. In addition to the teachings from the Bhagavad Gita, Tenneti et al. (2022) establish Sthitha Prajna (steady intellect) as a foundational pillar of leadership. Organisational impact is driven by this self-mastery: Kaipa (2014) emphasises viveka

(discernment) for ethical decisions, while Kumar et al. (2019) demonstrate how virtues like Hanuman's promote engagement. Sathish et al. (2019) improve effectiveness through the Mishra paradigm and management of the three Gunas, while Singh et al. (2025) apply this to healthcare leadership.

Kakkad (2009) sees Krishna as an archetypal leader whose ethics and vision complement each other strategically. Hee and Gurd (2010) link the above insights with Chinese philosophy, while Simpson and Cunha (2021) outline a "Linked-Leadership Model" for addressing complexity in today's world. According to Kumar et al. (2024), leadership based on Rama will bring about transformation. Together, these authors portray the BG as providing foundational self-knowledge and an understanding of how to manage organizations practically (Tenneti et al., 2022; Kuknor et al., 2025), provide timeless strategic paradigms (Kakkad, 2009; Kumar et al., 2024), and create global-level models to deal with contemporary problems (Hee & Gurd, 2010; Simpson & Cunha, 2021).

Theme 2- Ethical Foundations for Sustainable Organizations

The BG contributes valuable lessons for sustainable organizations based on dharma and karma. Muniapan and Satpathy (2013) believe it inspires transparency and ethical governance, while Sinha (2016) relates self-development to empathetic value-based structures. Tripathy et al. (2020) mention that this embeds logic, ethics, and emotion (logos, ethos, pathos). Dhamija et al. (2023) place BG as a mentoring tool for stakeholder satisfaction, while Sinha & Singh (2013) have identified its role in maintaining integrity during adversarial conditions. Frey et al. (2017) relate the BG emphasis on interdependence to better management, greed-averse. Sharma (1999) and Natesan et al. (2009) stress practical action and Nishkama Karma, unselfish action.

The scope is further widened by Linderborg (2024) to establish its universal applicability through cross-cultural analysis of Indian and Greek philosophy. Critical review of specific applications, on the other hand, is undertaken by AV (2025). Finally, the principles of BG provide a highly important schema in resolving modern leadership challenges with ancient ethical connectedness.

Theme 3- Inner Mastery and Self-Transcendent Leadership

The Bhagavad Gita functions as a revolutionary guide for leaders to rise above their ego. Hegde and Nayak (2025) recommend spiritual practices such as yoga in chaos corporatized, while Jijina and Biswas (2022) have located Samatva as a cognitive ability in resilience. This expands upon the philosophical presentation of Samatva as transcending dualities by Jijina et al. (2020), which Pathak (2025) links to Gandhi's fearless self-management.

Varying perspectives in the literature suggest how Gita metaphorically represents the relationship between leaders and knowledge through moving to influence (Rajandran, 2017), while the blending of dull action/doing & intention (Michael, 2018) diminishes the over-reliance on logic, as expressed by Mukherjee (2019); Deshmukh & Dwivedi (2017) and Nayak (2015) present the use of Gita archetypes as examples of how to dissolve modern ethical dilemmas (or more appropriately expressed, "tragic questions"); Ahmad (1999) addresses modern materialistic themes, stressing that the condition of internal health is essential in developing external ethical considerations. Collectively, all these works encourage that an individual must upgrade their awareness software to properly utilize their "hardware" as a leader.

Theme 4- Transformative Pedagogies and Character Formation

According to Lolla (2020), the Bhagavad Gita's pedagogical approach includes both leadership development and character development through an additional layer of value (cognitive, long-term). Jayanti's (2020) application of Lolla's principles as behavioural solutions for both ethical and stress-related issues. In organisational contexts, Rai (2007) addressed cohesion through promoting collaboration via conflict resolution, and Maharana's (2019) emphasis on the spiritual aspect of developing humans as a resource in HR. Van Hoecke's (2006) guru-leadership model and Sinha & Srivastava's (2022) critique of reductionism, which frames leadership as the link between spiritual insight and tangible outcomes, complete the cycle. This process leads to peaceful organisations (Maharana, 2019; Rai, 2007) maintained by holistic leadership (Van Hoecke, 2006; Sinha & Srivastava, 2022), starting with micro-cognitive acuity (Lolla, 2020) and ending with effective decision-making (Jayanti, 2020). As a result, the Gita methodically addresses contemporary issues through interrelated organisational and personal growth.

Theme 5- Resilient Leadership in Disruptive Times

There is much to learn in the Bhagavad Gita on how to be a resilient leader in disrupted times. In the context of authentic leadership, Bansal and Kapur (2023) emphasize that a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is ready through the holistic development, which also coincides with the authentic leadership model, developed by Jandhyala and Kumar (2023). Rastogi et al. (2023) also contribute that such teachings effectively avoid leadership gaps, and Kalra et al. (2017) associate committed service with fearless professional dedication. Dubey et al. (2024) support this empirically and have found that Karma Yoga improves performance in higher education.

Lastly, Yadav and Bagga (2020) believe that technology needs to be converged with spirituality to govern ethically. Collectively, these pieces make a cohesive structure in which ancient wisdom is the answer to contemporary problems in the realms of personal strength, organizational performance, and overall governance.

Discussion

This research greatly contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring leadership with reference to Bhagavad Gita studies. With an increasing trend in studies from 1999 to 2025 (RQ1), it highlights significant authors such as Singh S.P., Biswas U.N., and Jijina P. (RQ2), along with their prominent journals such as "Psychological Studies," "Journal of Human Values," and "Purushartha." Accordingly, the current study also identifies five significant themes (RQ3) related to the LS-BG domain. The subsequent section will discuss a comparative analysis of LSBG literature.

Evolution of LSBG literature

LSBG literature evolved from spiritual self-mastery & dharma (1st-12th centuries) to ethical action (20th century), with Krishna Seen as a transformational leader. In the 21st century, scholars apply its principles to servant, ethical & authentic leadership models, etc., emphasizing its relevance in governance, emotional intelligence & complex decision making. In this study, the authors divided the studies into two categories, i.e., pre-2017 & post-2017, due to the growth of literature as shown in the publication trend (Fig. 2).

Pre-2017 Literature: Establishing Philosophical Foundations for Management

The research preceding 2017 laid the ground for incorporating the Bhagavad Gita into management on the basis of concepts such as Dharma, Karma Yoga, Samatva, and Viveka. Authors such as

Sharma (1999) and Muniapan & Satpathy (2013) based responsibility-based ethics on moral clarity. This first and largely conceptual phase drew upon scriptural interpretation to provide examples of how spiritual maturity affects effectiveness and challenged the Western dominance with a value-centered alternative based on self-mastery. Continuing further from here, based on the Gita, Kalra et al. (2017) and Natesan et al. (2009) analyzed the impact of the Gita on ethical managerial practices. Though lean in empirical data, this scholarship provided an important intellectual foundation for cross-cultural leadership theories. This period legitimised spiritual leadership paradigms by presenting the Gita as a strategic management tool for long-term transformation (Srivastava et al., 2022). This led to important discussions about incorporating moral and emotional components into performance-driven organisational cultures.

Post-2017 Literature: Application, Empiricism, and Contemporary Relevance

In Bhagavad Gita leadership, post-2017 literature clearly shows a shift from theory to empirically supported, application-focused research. This period creates methodical structures in which concepts such as Sthitha Prajna, Samatva, and Nishkama Karma serve as practicable attributes developed via practice (Jijina & Biswas, 2022; Hegde & Nayak, 2025). Real-world management problems, such as COVID-19 crisis leadership and healthcare, are now addressed by contextual models (Bansal & Kapur, 2023; Dhamija et al., 2023). Furthermore, Dubey et al. (2024) empirically link Karma Yoga to performance and sustainability, while Jandhyala and Kumar (2023) relate Indian principles to authentic leadership. The Gita is validated as a practical model for transforming contemporary institutions into purpose-based, ethical systems in the face of global uncertainty by this transition from philosophy to tangible organisational structure.

Conceptual Framework for LSBG literature

To expound on the subject, the authors were able to use the Antecedent Decision Outcome framework, commonly referred to as RQ4, which systematically analyzes organizational phenomena by identifying the antecedent factors whereby situational variables function, followed by a "decision" stage where "mediators" and "internal/external" factors influence the antecedents, culminating in an "outcome" dimension that entails the consequences of a given action, such as enhancement of organizational outcomes and ethical behavior, where such aspects, being multi-dimensional, can be thoroughly understood, culminating in verifiable models that benefit theory and practice, such as in spirituality-based leadership, where intervention points can be identified precisely so that the most desirable outcomes can transpire while undesirable aspects can be mitigated precisely.

Antecedents (Independent Variable)

As independent factors propelling change, Bhagavad Gita leadership incorporates timeless principles into contemporary organizational personalities. Important ideas include Nishkama Karma (detached action), which guarantees process-focused excellence (12027), and Sthitha Prajna (stable mind) for inner stability (Tenneti et al., 2022). Furthermore, Samatva (equanimity) helps leaders build confidence in times of crisis by enabling them to transcend success and failure (Kaipa et al., 2020).

Three gunas or a personality type of a leader consists of Sattva (wisdom/calmness), Rajas (aggression) and Tamas (lack of knowledge) (Sathish et al, 2019). The gunas are part of the framework. The framework also identifies the role of Viveka (discernment) in leading people to morality by eliminating bias (Kaipa, 2014). Finally, through spiritual awareness, leaders develop

connections with each other, rather than being selfish, which motivates them to get others to recognize their interconnectedness (Frey et al., 2017). All these qualities work together to create the psychological foundation for successful leadership practices in many organizational environments.

Decision (Moderator)

Barriers such as ignorance, ego, and a lack of clarity around roles often stop leaders from achieving the leadership principles outlined in the Bhagavad Gita (Kuknor et al., 2022). Additionally, the context in which organizations operate serves as a moderating factor. Organizational support serves as a determining factor for the effectiveness of those spiritual values (Rastogi et al., 2023), while the alignment of culture has an impact upon the application of those philosophies (Hee & Gurd, 2010). Therefore, there may be significant challenges in applying the concepts of detachment and Servant Leadership in transactional or materialistic environments.

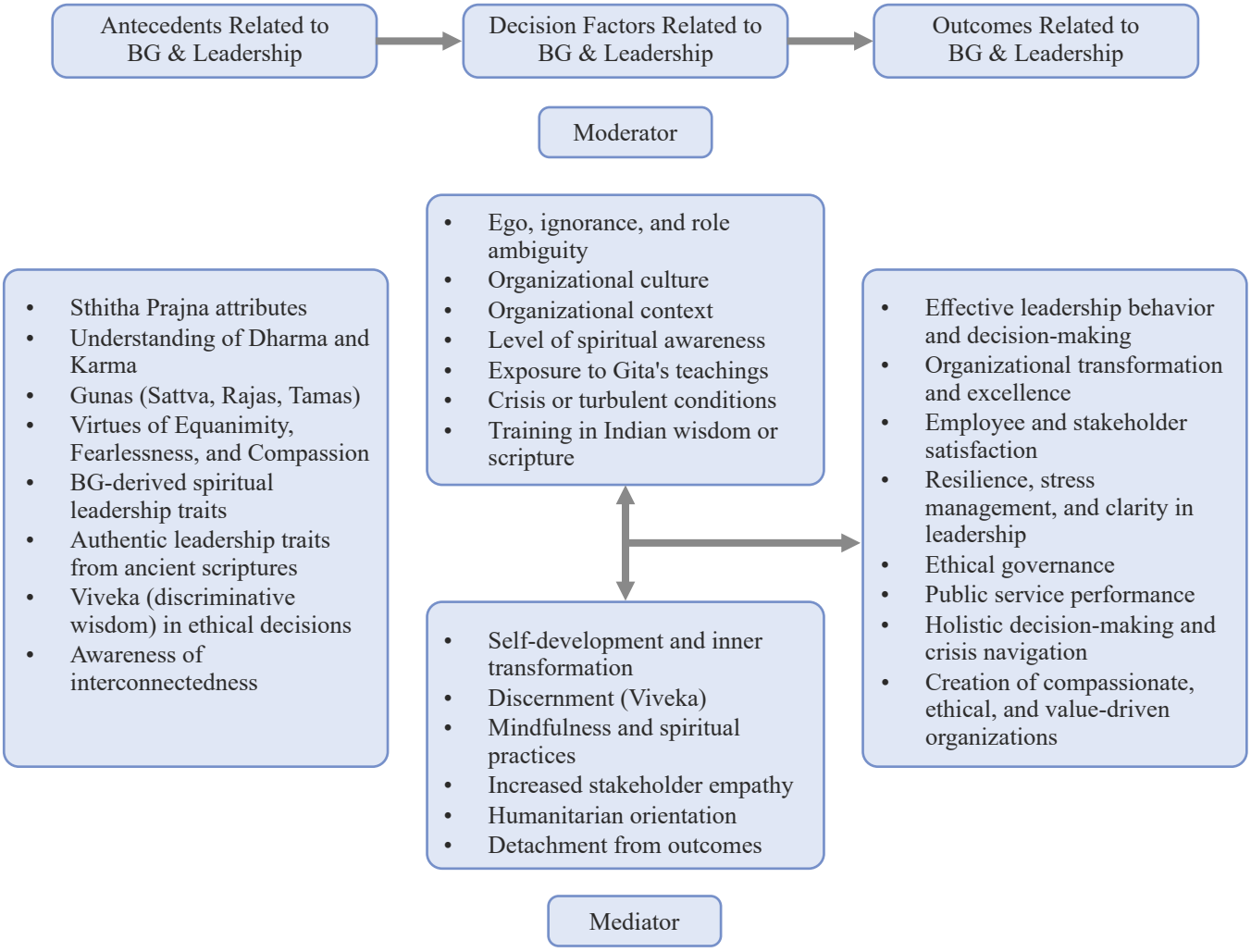


Fig. 3- ADO framework in the LSBG domain

Source: Authors'

Decision (Mediator)

Practicing hard and changing your inner self is needed to take the values from the Bhagavad Gita and express them in a leadership way. Spiritual practices like Sakshi Bhava help with managing your emotions, and Sinha (2016) shows the importance of self-development for improving strategic competencies (Jijina et al., 2020). Hegde and Nayak (2025) state that these help clarify thoughtful decisions and how to make them during stressful times. Therefore, this inner transformation leads to developing empathy and being concerned about stakeholders (Dhamija et al., 2023), and is the connection from philosophical principles to effective, long-term results for organizations.

Outcomes (Dependent Variable)

Virtues found in the Bhagavad Gita develop a foundation for ethical and sustainable leadership models. Leaders embodying the principles of Dharma and Nishkama Karma exemplify authenticity and impartiality, resulting in increased performance levels even during uncertain circumstances (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2013; Jayanti, 2020). This spiritual growth supports organisational transformation and resilience (Kumar et al., 2024) while simultaneously increasing satisfaction among stakeholders and enhancing the quality of decision making (Dhamija et al., 2023). Additionally, cultivating workplaces with high levels of engagement based on virtue fosters empathy (Sinha, 2016; Srivastava et al., 2024) which, in turn, reduces stress and creates a shared vision (Bansal & Kapur, 2023). The practical application of these principles consistently creates effective leaders and builds conscious organisations, as shown in Figure 3.

Theme-Wise Future Research Questions

The most important contribution of this study would be its theme-wise future research questions (RQ5). The authors thoroughly crafted specific research questions based on the discussion, in line with the thematic areas. The study calls on future researchers to conduct further studies using different methodological techniques based on the questions attached below. Table 6 below will shed light on the theme-wise future research questions.

Table 6: Theme-wise future research questions

Serial No	Theme Details	Future Research Questions
Theme 1	Visionary Leadership and Strategic Dharma	How does the incorporation of the Sthitha Prajna leadership archetype from ancient Indian wisdom influence the effectiveness of transformational leadership in contemporary organizations?
		To what extent can a Bhagavad Gita-inspired linked leadership model improve strategic decision-making and ethical performance in international corporate settings?
Theme 2	Ethical Foundations for Sustainable Organizations	What is the impact on long-run stakeholder trust and organizational legitimacy when CSR strategies embed dharma karma principles from the Bhagavad Gita?
		How do leaders trained in Gita-centric ethics differ in their crisis management strategies compared to those with traditional business ethics training?
Theme 3	Inner Mastery and Self-Transcendent Leadership	What are the measurable impacts of self-mastery-based leadership on employee trust, engagement, and psychological safety?
		Can Bhagavad Gita-based leadership development interventions outperform traditional leadership training in promoting self-regulation and ethical consistency?
Theme 4	Transformative Pedagogies and Character Formation	What are the cognitive and behavioral effects of incorporating Bhagavad Gita teachings in executive education programs?
		To what extent can Gita-based character education enhance ethical awareness in performance-driven corporate cultures?
Theme 5	Resilient Leadership in Disruptive Times	Can Gita-based leadership models reduce burnout and emotional exhaustion in front-line leaders during extended crises?
		What differences emerge between leaders trained in Bhagavad Gita principles and those using conventional models during periods of uncertainty?

Source: Authors'

Implications

The fact that the Bhagavad Gita is integrated into the global management thought due to the impact of Eastern traditions is a necessary addition to the leadership literature because it introduces new variables, including Dharma (responsibility), Viveka (discernment), and the Gunas (personality modes) that are not associated with Western rational-transactional models (Kaipa, 2014; Sathish et al., 2019). The suggested Antecedentli - Decisioni -Outcome (ADO) model says that inner virtues such as Sthitha Prajna and Samatva are connected to leadership performance but moderated by the organizational setting (Tenneti et al., 2022; Kuknor et al., 2022; Sinha, 2016). This model facilitates the development of genuine and transformational leadership ideas by considering a spiritually focused approach with the focus on intentionality and ethical clarity (Simpson and Cunha, 2021; Jandhyala and Kumar, 2023). The synthesis of the literature in the form of themes of visionary leadership, inner mastery, and resilience makes this study relevant to the application of spiritual models to practice, as well as stimulates cross-cultural studies to make global leadership

theories broader (Hegde and Nayak, 2025; Lolla, 2020; Bansal and Kapur, 2023; Dubey et al., 2024).

It is managerial in that the review shows how BG-based leadership fosters resilience, moral clarity, and decision-making. Such principles as Nishkama Karma (action without attachment) make emotional regulation more effective and allow leaders to act without attachment to consequences, which is of critical importance in times of crisis, such as COVID-19 (Tenneti et al., 2022; Jijina and Biswas, 2022; Bansal and Kapur, 2023). By building self-awareness, i.e., being mindful, and focusing on long-term vision instead of short-term advantages, managers are able to reduce burnout and build loyal teams (Hegde and Nayak, 2025; Dhamija et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2025). Self-control and transformation are considered by the Gita as the preconditions to ethical acts, and leaders are encouraged to treat their profession as a service-oriented profession (Jandhyala & Kumar, 2023; Pathak, 2025). This changes the paradigm of ego-based reactivity to a meaning-based leadership that facilitates the inclusion of cultures and the strategy (Rastogi et al., 2023).

Lastly, the BG can give deep insights into reconciling inner spiritual values with outer ethical behavior. It does not present Dharma or Samatva as an abstract idea, but rather as a set of tools to understand when something is right or wrong and eliminate complexity by doing the right thing (Tenneti et al., 2022; Kuknor et al., 2022; Jijina and Biswas, 2022). This is in line with servant leadership, where self-mastery is necessary to overcome the ego and fill the spiritual gap in contemporary organizations (Simpson and Cunha, 2021; Frey et al., 2017). Leaders can build high-trust organizations that are sustainable by combining Karma Yoga and transparency (Muniapan and Satpathy, 2013; Tripathy and others, 2020). Moreover, the fact that the BG is a cross-culturally relevant theory can be supported by its comparison with Greek and Chinese philosophy (Linderborg, 2024; Hee and Gurd, 2010; Sinha and Srivastava, 2022).

Limitations & Conclusion

Although it provides a brief literature review of LSBG, the study has limitations due to its reliance on English-language reviews and articles obtained only via Scopus. Additional studies must be conducted in the future to cover other types of documents and databases, such as WOS and PubMed, in order to capture the non-Scopus-indexed work. Also, other publications in other languages should be considered in further studies, and more search keywords should be introduced to retrieve more exhaustive relevant data.

This paper will analytically examine leadership based on the Bhagavad Gita and its increasing universal applicability within two decades, especially in demanding settings. The analysis is motivated by the Indian scholarship to identify five essential dimensions, which are visionary direction, ethical grounding, inner mastery, transformative teaching, and resilience. These spiritual virtues are linked to the outcomes of leadership through self-regulation and ethical clarity in a proposed conceptual framework and provide the depth of theoretical understanding and practical tools. The work provides an opportunity to incorporate ancient wisdom into the modern process of development by stating the lines of future research. Finally, it adds a purpose-based, consciousness-based, and universal responsibility leadership model that the world is in urgent need of to integrate integrity amidst the polarized world full of crisis.

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